

TWENTY NINE STUDIO & PRODUCTION  
PRESENT



# UP



# AT NIGHT

A FILM BY NELSON MAKENGO



 [nuitdeboutfilm&arts](#)

Olafur Eliasson

WIELS



Africala  
CREATIVITY IS LIFE

ARGOS

TWENTY  
NINE

UP AT NIGHT, color, 4K,  
stereo, Lingala and French  
spoken English subtitles,  
DRC/BE, 2019, 20'

Directed by Nelson Makengo  
Camera Nelson Makengo  
Sound recording Moimi Wezam  
Editing Nelson Makengo  
Sound mixing Franck Moka  
Produced by Rosa Spaliviero  
(Twenty Nine Studio &  
Production)

## Synopsis

darkness > in the depths of  
the working class neighbour-  
hoods,  
in the absurdity of the ru-  
bble of endless nights,  
night > in this nocturnal  
shipwreck of the physical  
and symbolic power cut,  
resistance > abandoned to  
itself like a motherless chick,  
like a pot without a lid, like  
a house without a window,  
without a door, like a door  
without a lock, like a lock wi-  
thout a key...  
light > resilience,  
darkness > and the beauty  
of resistance?



## Stestament

### Mirror City

Congo has two large hydroelectric dams on the Congo River: Inga I and Inga II. But the city, the country, plunges into the depths of darkness from one day to the next. Because electricity must be sold to the neighbouring country, because the State's revenues must be maximized, these dams serve foreign investors as well as all the wealth of the country's soil and subsoil. At the same time, the city, the country was opening up to crime, urban violence and insecurity throughout its territory. A whole arsenal of physical and symbolic violence is gradually emerging on the faces of many of us in the face of this mistrust of public power, which, for the satisfaction of a few individuals, deprives an entire population of an existential development on the intellectual and material level. Because light brings back development, it is said...

Now abandoned to like a motherless chick, like a pot without a lid, like a house without a window, without a door, like a door without a lock, like a lock without a key... Kinshasa has grown to 15 million inhabitants (perhaps a little more), without any rethinking of urban planning and the electricity servo system.

«Kinshasa cannot be understood without a reflection on reflections, made up of realities, mirrors, images, imitation, imagination»<sup>1</sup>. In the depths of the neighbourhoods, the nights are animated by the

1 (Filip De Boeck & Marie-Françoise Plissart, 2005, Kinshasa. Récits de la ville invisible. Bruxelles: Renaissance du Livre.)

reflections of these imposed representations of the day. To inscribe them in a new temporality, therefore at night, to confront them with undesired societal conditions, allows me, from an emotional point of view, to enter into the intimacy of what may be concealed from me by these Shadows and lights with a visual discourse in phase shift on these characters from reality who reinvent themselves, who survive. Aesthetically, this story explores a kind of creation of a social force in contradiction to the difficulties: construction cycles and destruction of mirrors. An atmosphere transposed from a daily reality as the reflection of a mirror that creeps into the nights, which allows the film to instinctively open a door to a self-representation of human conditions in a state of resilience, of the surrealist representation of daily life, of the beauty of individuals and of the spaces that constitute this city, archaic, traditional, modern-futurist at once.

Nuit Debout is also the story of the idea of this unfinished city that is nestled in the demographic effervescence of the 21st century.

But this Utopia of fierce modernism remains engraved in our minds. A debt is a debt. In the meantime, the population is reinventing the question of individual lighting to counter the darkness, the obscurity, the personal and collective shadows. Nuit Debout is part of this infernal whirlwind where politics and religion, hope and despair parasitize each other in a new temporality of the aesthetics of a nocturnal texture, in an open territory where light reinvents a Kinshasa of many paces.

Nelson Makengo  
Film Director



## Nelson Makengo

Nelson Makengo (b.1990) lives and works in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He has a degree from the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Kinshasa (2015) and has been trained at La Femis in Paris (2016). Makengo is fundamentally a self-taught photographer and filmmaker. In his film practice, Makengo privileges the use of figurines of well-known movie character, from animated movies and superheroes, and of visual and sound archives, to sublimate and patch together the fragmented history of his country and city. A saturated and contracted use of colour allows him to appropriate his urban environment. He was in residence at WIELS 2018.

In three years, he short films, almost self-produced, which were distributed in many festivals and important venues in Africa, Europe and North and South America (like : Vues d'Afrique – Canada, Festival international du court-métrage de Clermont-Ferrand – France, Congo In Harlem – USA, Videoex Film Festival – Switzerland, Festival cinémas d'Afrique – Lausanne, Encontro do Cine Negro – Brasil, Biennale Videobrasil – Brasil, Biennale Lubumbashi - DRC).

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### Postproduction facilities

Argos - Centre for Audiovisual Arts and Atelier Graphoui